



Small Group Outings - Volunteers

The small group Going Out is an essential element in our Elementary Program. The children develop independence, resourcefulness, and self-confidence through functioning capably in the larger world with minimal adult assistance. The role of the adult is an active one; remaining focused and observant while refraining from participating or interfering can be quite demanding.

The adult should intervene only:

- to ensure the children's safety by managing interactions with unknown individuals, or preventing interactions if you feel safety is a concern.
- to interrupt unsafe or inappropriate behavior and return the children to school.
- to observe, record, and transmit information about the experience to the teacher.

How Children Prepare and Plan

Children are ready for a small group outing when they have demonstrated a reasonable level of responsibility, have shown that they are capable of working in a group, and have demonstrated the ability to be in control of their actions. This practice starts in the Primary as they learn how to conduct themselves and interact. It is a continuous practice supported at home, in the classroom, on campus, and during projects, field trips, and outings.

Children will contact parent drivers and the establishment they wish to visit. With some guidance they make phone calls, arrange the schedule, and map the route. Children are learning to manage the different steps involved in planning and executing an outing. They are building their capacity for initiating, sequential planning, organization, communicating, and follow-through, which takes practice. Mistakes are also part of this practice.

Before executing a Going Out the children will have practiced so they can be prepared to:

- carry all that they need - emergency info forms, going out bag, notebooks, pencils, money, etc.
- communicate any special health considerations
- handle monetary transactions
- conduct communications for the group
- know what behavior is expected of them
- direct the driver to the destination through a map or written instructions*

*If their directions are off or if they miss a turn, it can be a learning experience to go a bit off track (for perhaps 5 or 10 minutes). If students don't notice that you've made a wrong turn you can say, "Hmmm, this doesn't seem quite right. Let's pull over and look at the map."

Volunteering for a Small Group Outing

- When you arrive, please park.
- Check in with the front office.
- Review the *Driver Policy* and *Volunteer Expectations*.

- When the children meet you, have them show you how they've prepared and what they are bringing for the outing.
- Once everyone is loaded in the car, establish or review your expectations and the requirements set by the school with regards to student conduct in the car.
- Ask the children to describe the safe and respectful behavior that is expected of them. They can even suggest what you can do or say if they are not behaving appropriately.
- Make it clear that you take safety very seriously and will need to pull over and/or return to school if the children's behavior is not safe and respectful.

Upon Arrival

- Before opening any doors, the children will discuss which doors will be used for unloading (curb side only) and where the children will stand to wait while the adult locks up. The adult gives their approval before anyone moves.
- If parking needs to be paid, the children should be prepared to pay an attendant or purchase a parking pass.
- Approaching a parking lot or street, the children stand two feet back from the curb and watch to see when it is safe to cross. They tell you when it is safe; you should confirm and give the "ok" before your group crosses the street.
- All children should remain close together. The adult may walk just behind the children, watching that all their behavior is safe and appropriate, that the environment is safe, and that any interactions with other adults are safe and appropriate.

At the Destination

- Children should stay within sight of the adult(s) at all times.
- Help focus the children in the group by modeling and possibly directing their attention to the speaker.
- If you are having difficulty with a child or a group of children and they do not respond to your redirection, please return to school and notify the teacher. If safe, please call the office and let us know of the need to return early.
- When adults accompany children on a trip where a speaker or docent takes questions, only the children should ask or respond to questions. If adults ask their own questions the speaker tends to engage with the adults above the children's heads.

It is appropriate for the adult to navigate the return trip unless the children are prepared with return directions. When you arrive at MSB, please park and walk the children into the office to check in. The teacher may ask you to share feedback about your experience - please do so freely and openly.